

The Family of Owen M.

OFF WE GO TO LEARN EVERYDAY THINGS
ABOUT ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY < O&M >



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Orientation and Mobility < O&M >

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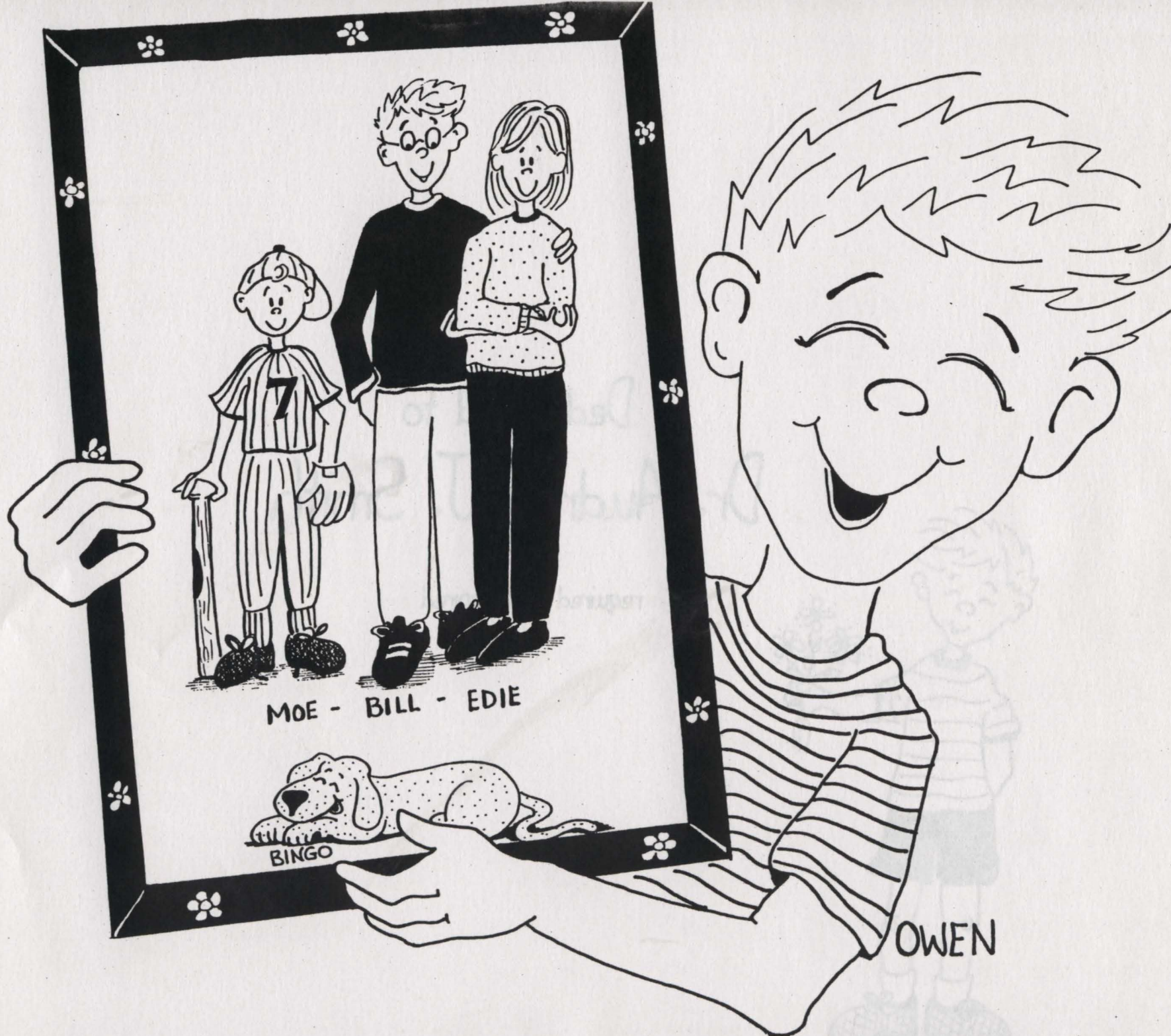
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Dedicated to
Dr. Audrey J. Smith

required and inspired





MOE - BILL - EDIE

BINGO

OWEN



FROM THE DESK OF
OWEN M.

Dear Friends,

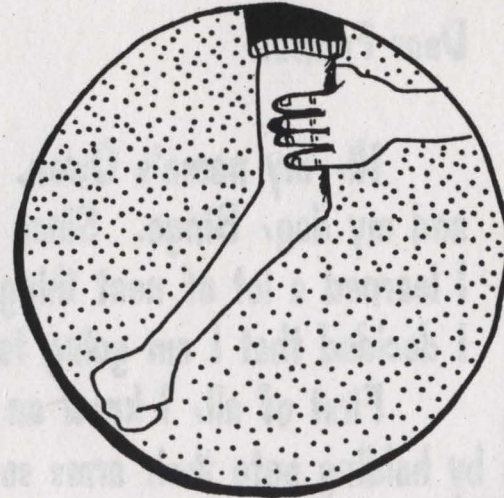
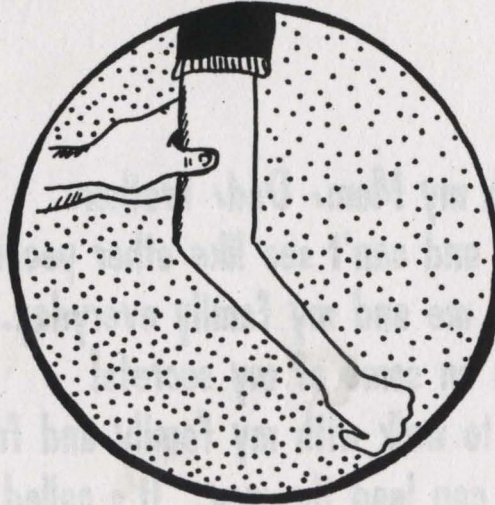
Hi, my name's Owen. I live with my Mom, Dad, brother, and my dog, Bingo. Since I am blind and can't see like other people do, I learned a lot of neat things that help me and my family everyday. I decided that I am going to let you in on some of my secrets!

First of all, I know an easy way to walk with my family and friends by holding onto their arms so that they can lead the way. It's called sighted guide.

Now that we know sighted guide, we're unstoppable!! We can go anywhere!

Here's how we do it.....

First things first! Before we go I need to know how to hold onto someone's arm.
When I'm walking sighted guide I remember to hold my hand the same way I hold a can of soda.



When I walk with my brother Moe
or my friend Joe,
I put my hand above their elbow
before we go.

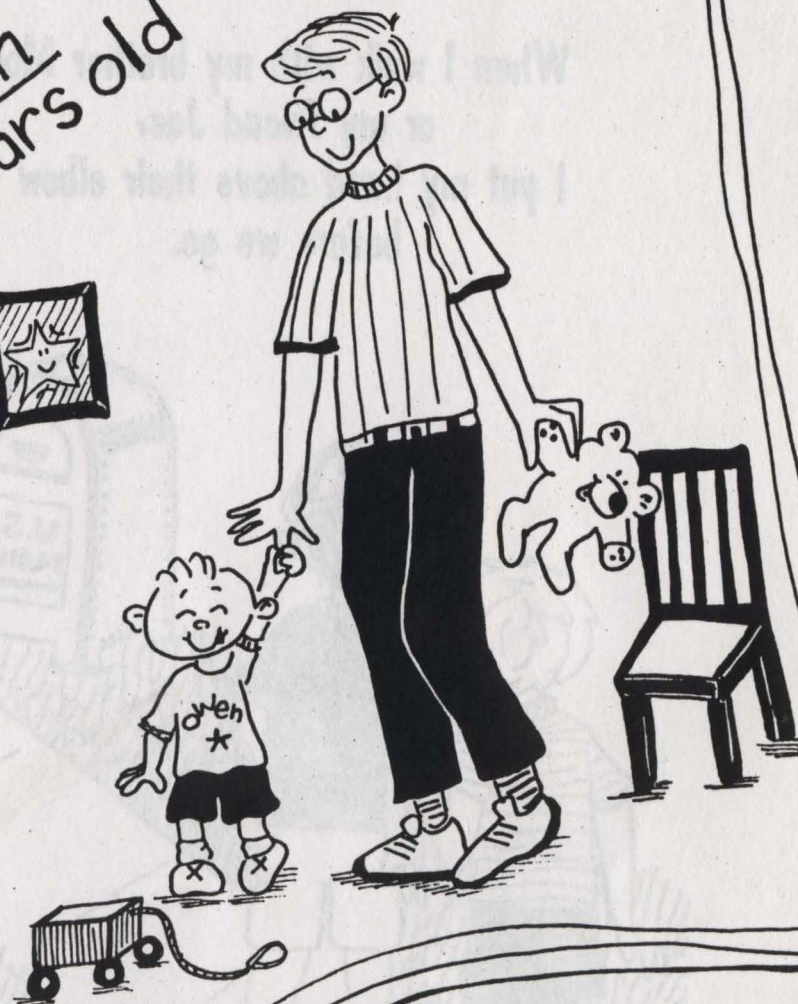


It's a different story with Mom and Dad
since they're a lot taller than me.
I usually hold on to their wrist
near their watch or bracelet.



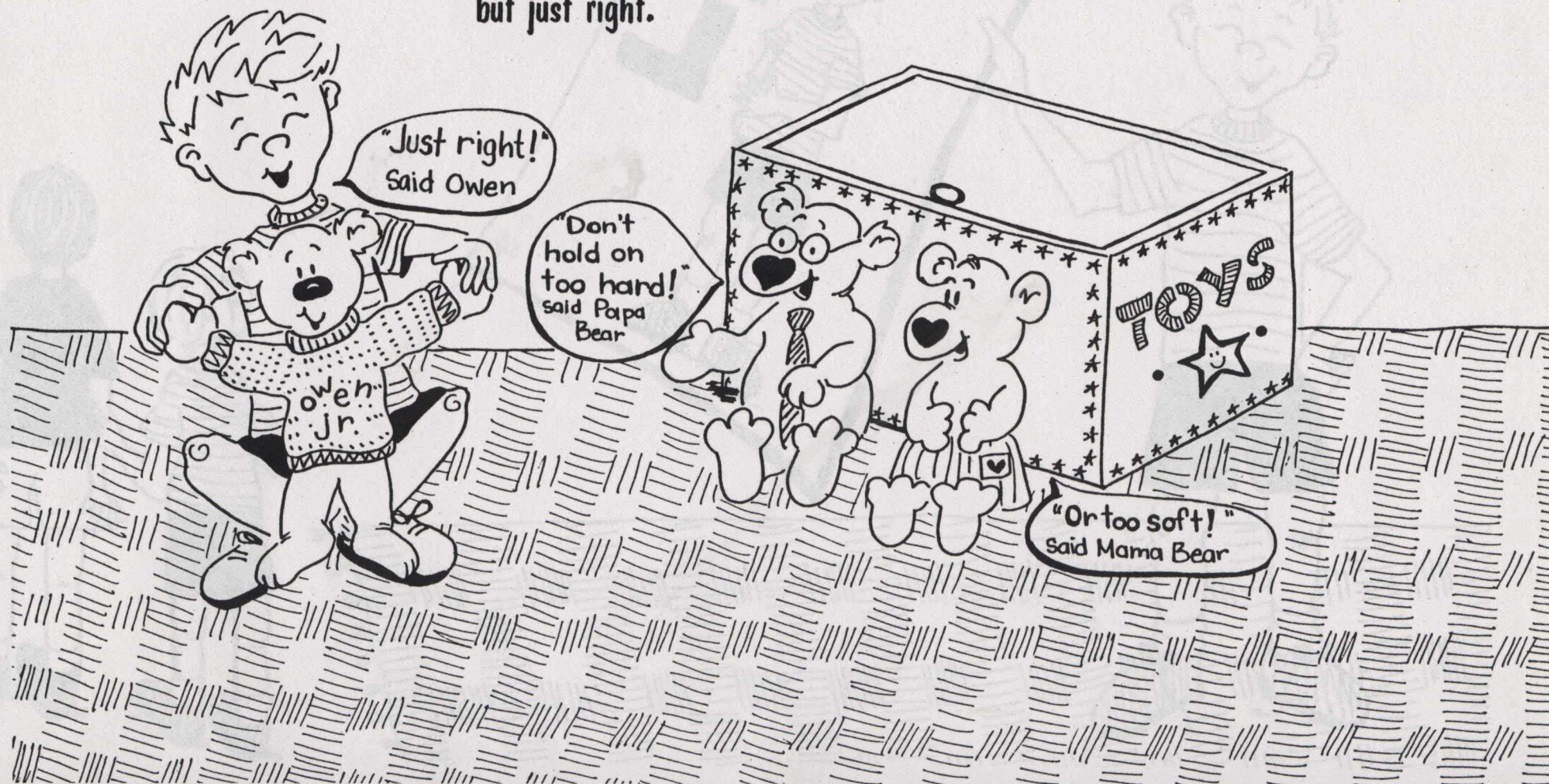
OWEN
9 MONTHS

Owen
3 years old

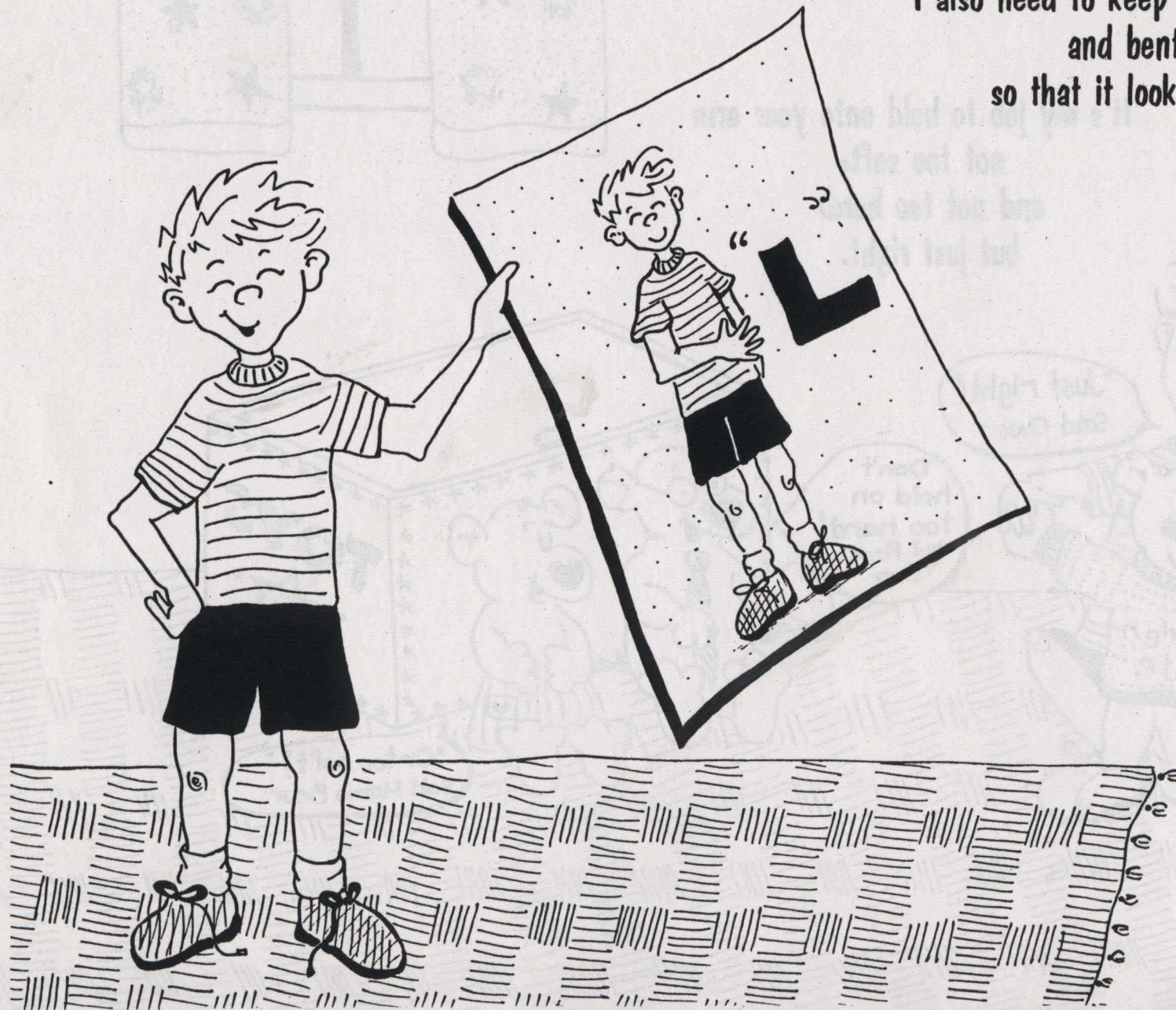


I can remember that when I was really little,
I used to hold onto their fingers.

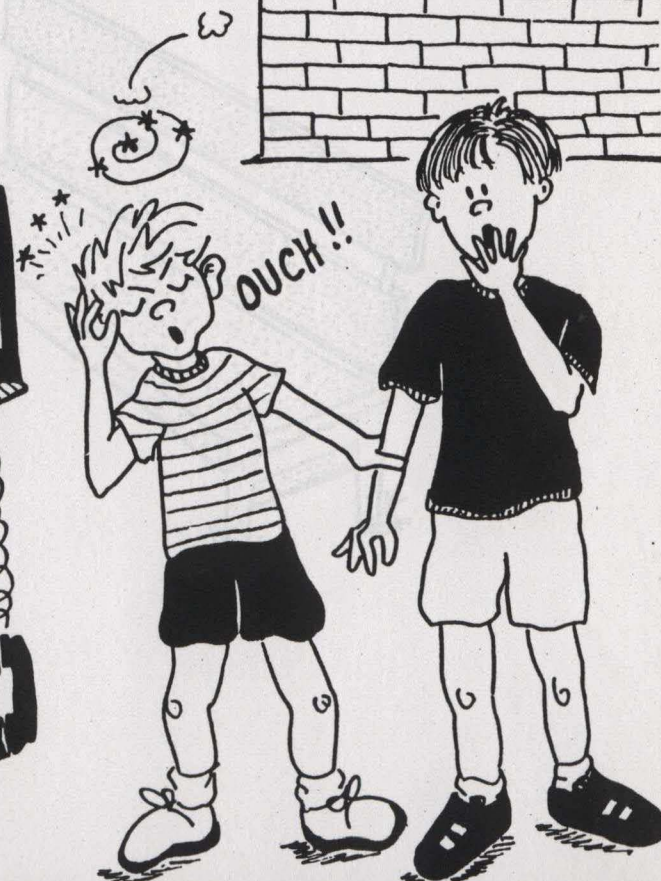
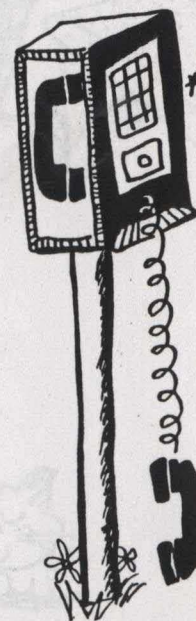
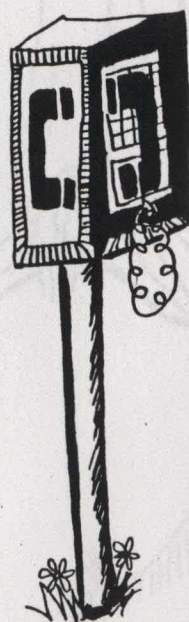
It's my job to hold onto your arm
not too soft,
and not too hard,
but just right.



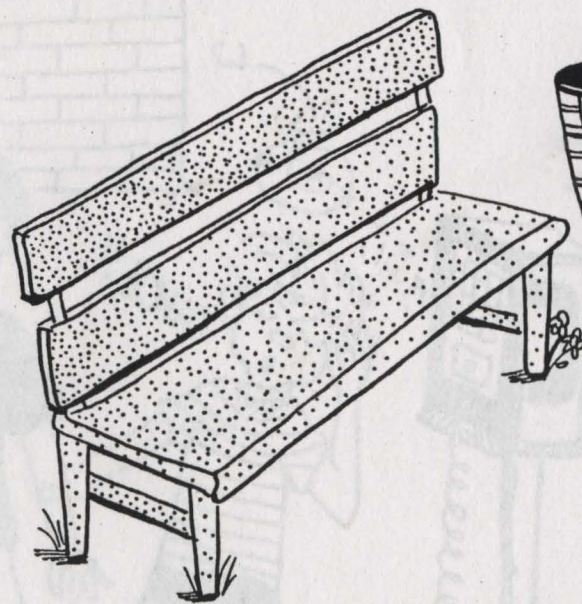
I also need to keep my arm near to my side
and bent at the elbow
so that it looks like the letter "L".



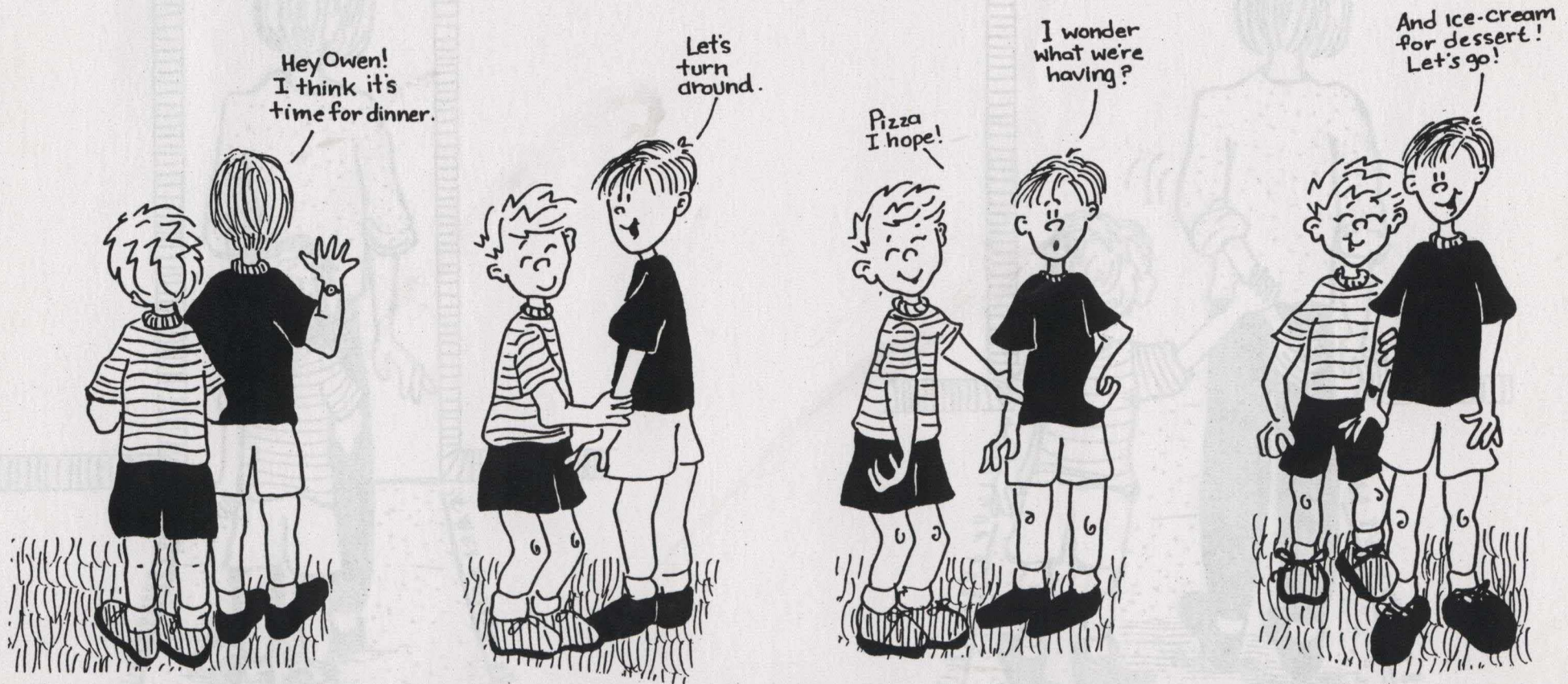
I really have to remember to keep my elbow bent and close to my side,
especially when going around corners or turning because
my guide and I are a team and teams stay together.



Whoever I'm walking with always
stays a step in front to guide me.
If they stop because there is something
in front of us, I have extra time to stop too.
This way I won't bump my knee on a big
old tree or trip over a cat or things like that.



When we come to a dead end or anytime we need to turn,
we can change directions in an easy way. What we do is turn towards each other face to face,
I switch my grip to the other arm, we finish the turn, and off we go.



Sometimes spots are just too small for the two of us to get through.

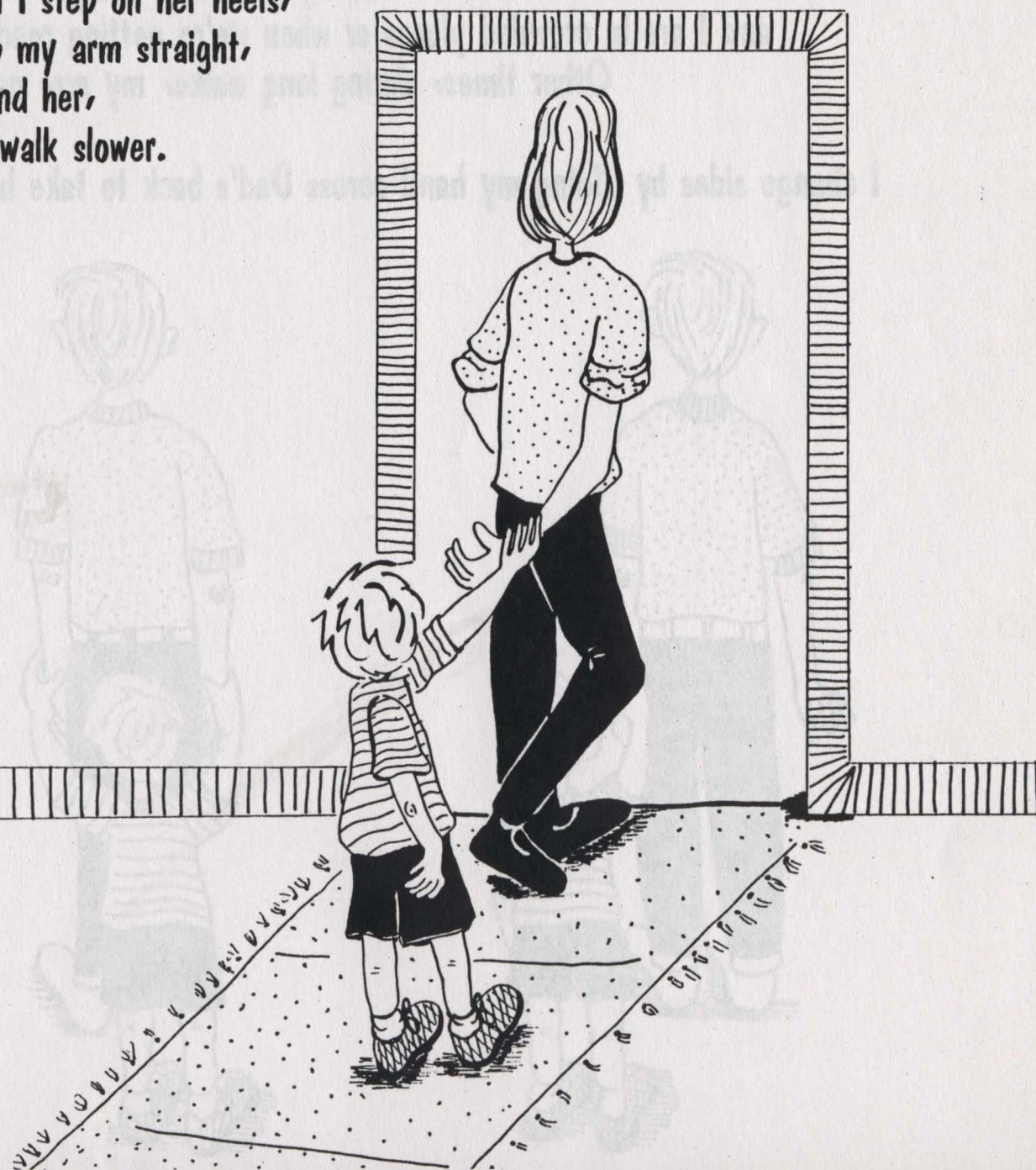
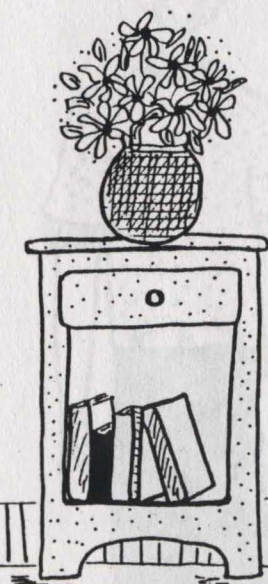
Mom lets me know by putting her
arm behind her back.



Then I know I have to step behind her
so we're walking in a straight line.

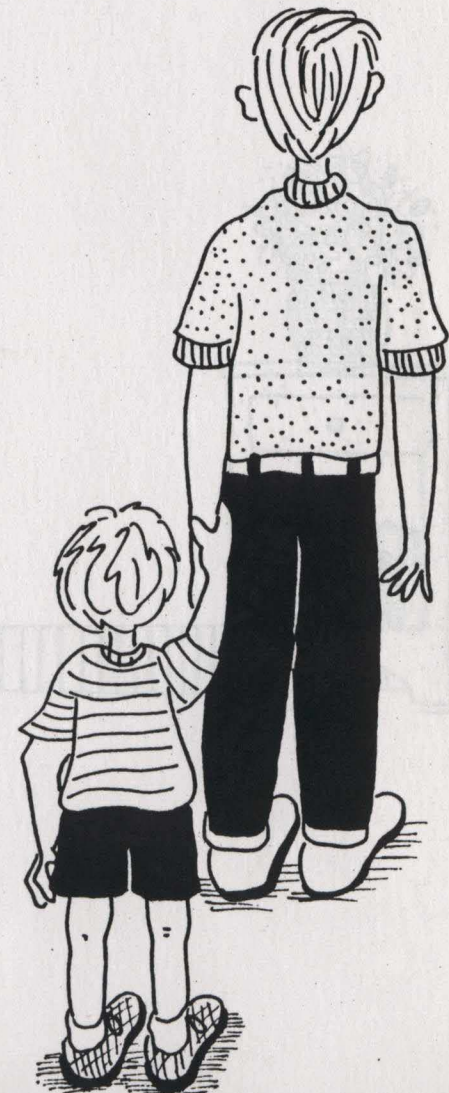
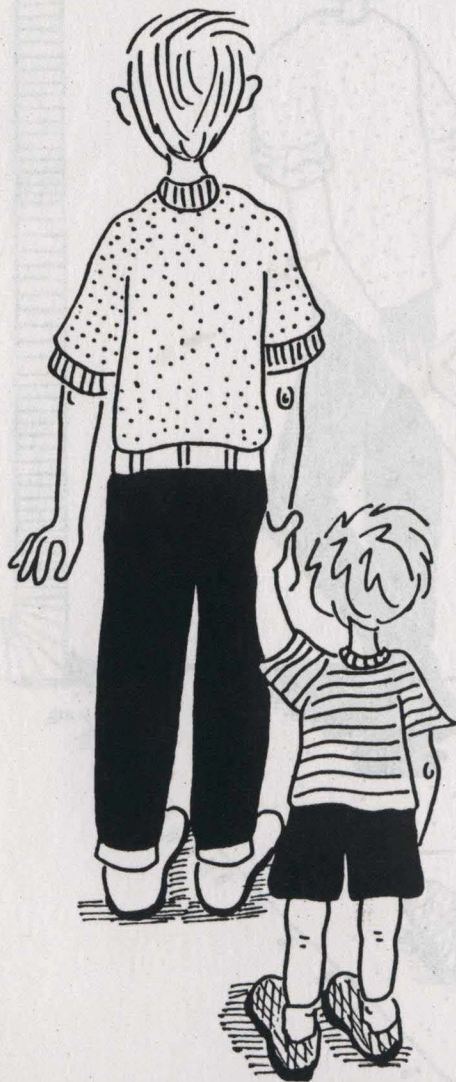


At times Mom says "ouch" when I step on her heels,
so I have to remember to keep my arm straight,
keep a full step behind her,
and put on the brakes so I walk slower.

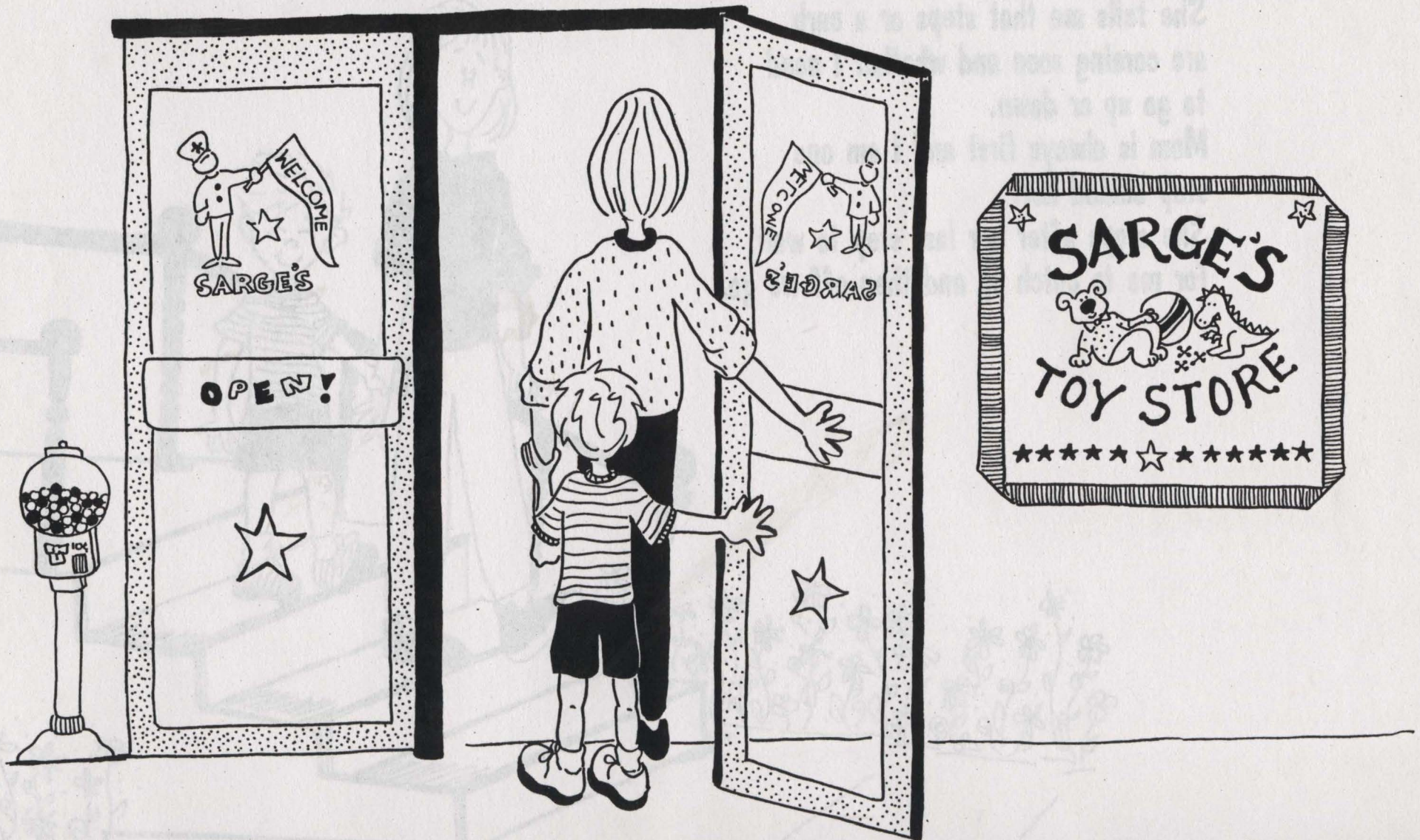


Sometimes when I'm walking I need to change sides, like when Dad
and I are in crowded places or when we're getting ready to go through doors.
Other times, during long walks, my arm needs a rest.

I change sides by sliding my hand across Dad's back to take his other arm, then off we go.



My family always tells me two things I need to know about doors.
First, they let me know if the door opens toward me or away from me.
Second, they tell me if I need to change sides because now that I'm bigger
my free hand helps hold the door open as we pass through.

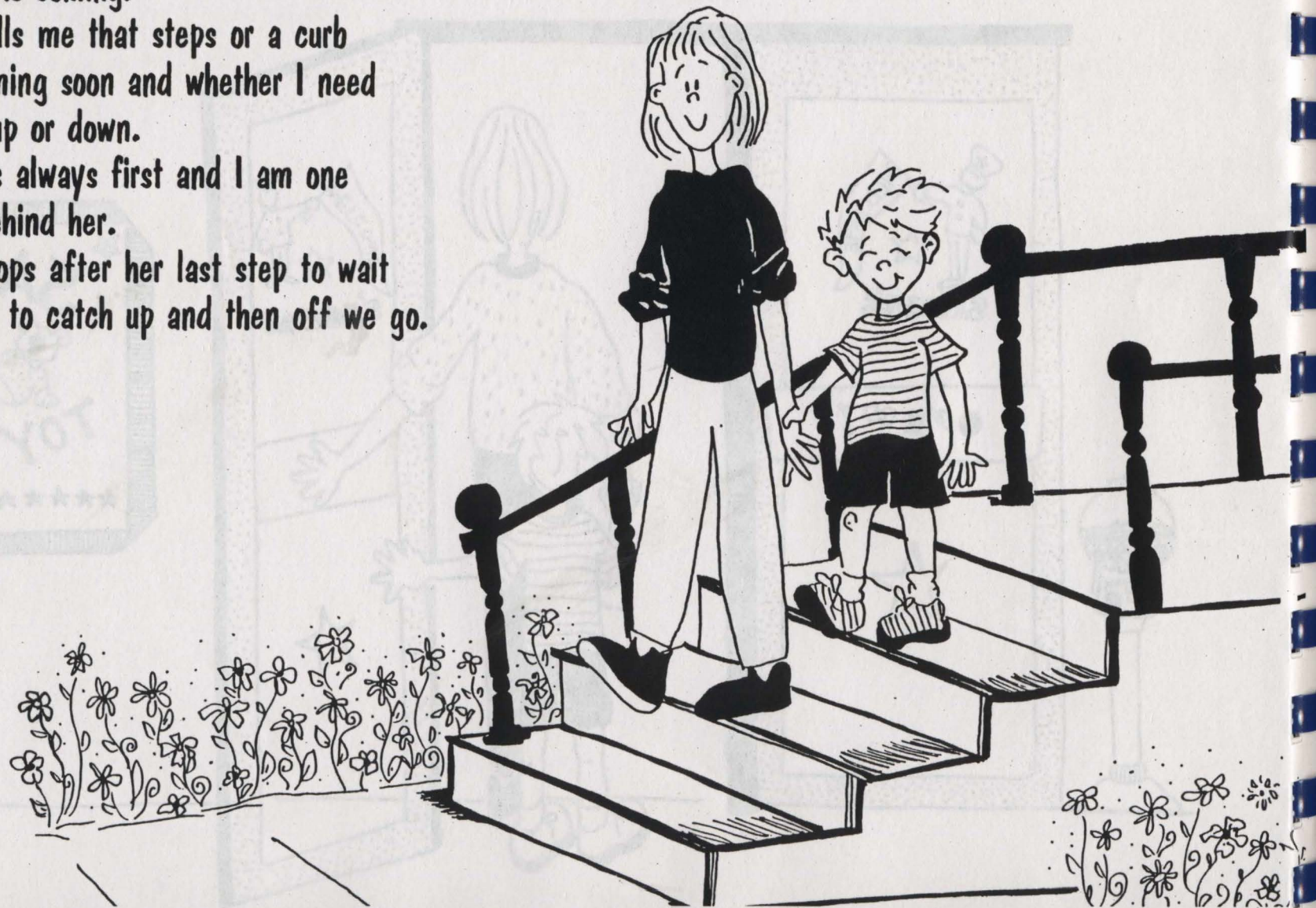


Whenever we come to steps, a curb,
or anything that is a little bit out of
the ordinary, Mom's job is to stop
and let me know that something
special is coming.

She tells me that steps or a curb
are coming soon and whether I need
to go up or down.

Mom is always first and I am one
step behind her.

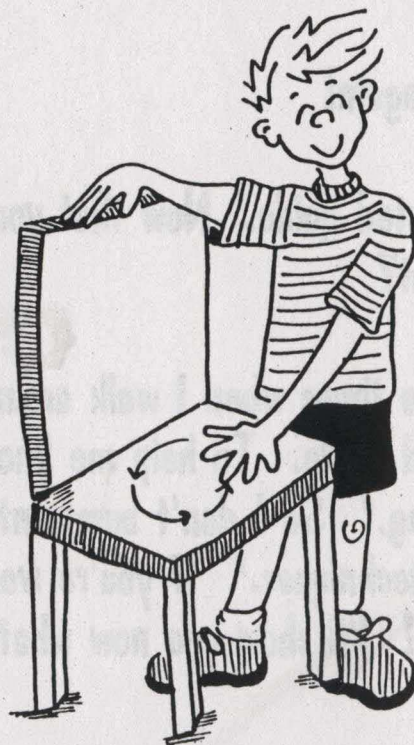
She stops after her last step to wait
for me to catch up and then off we go.



When I'm tuckered out and need to take a load off my feet, Dad leads the way to a comfortable seat. When we're walking to the chair, he lets me know if we're coming to the front, back, or side of it.



No matter how we face the chair, Dad always puts his hand on the back of it and I slide my hand down his arm until I find it myself.



I always check the chair with my hand to make sure that it's okay to sit down.



Dad taught me to make sure both of my legs are touching the back of the chair before I sit so that I won't fall off, or go rolling away if the chair moves.

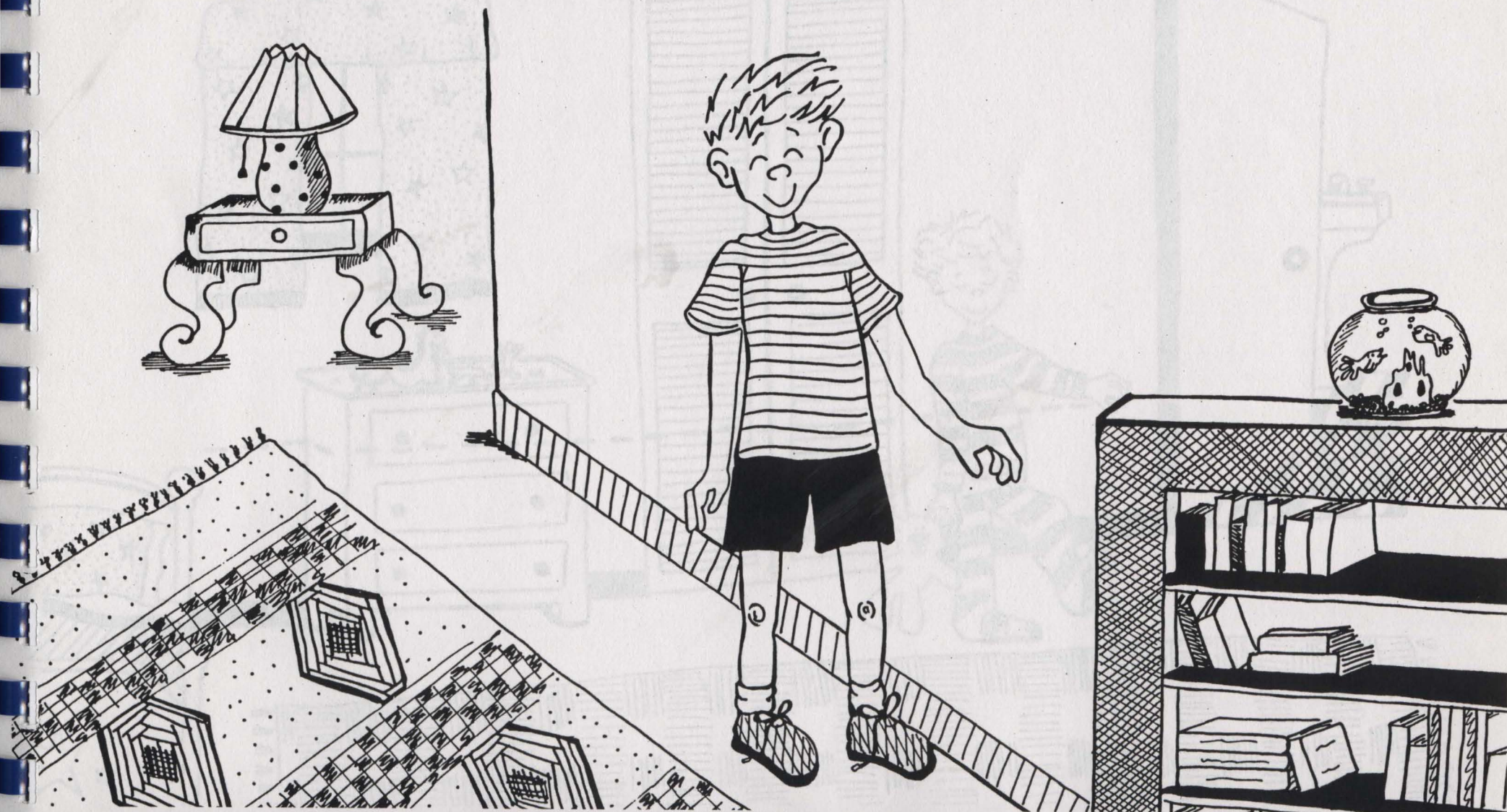


-----Hey, it's me again!

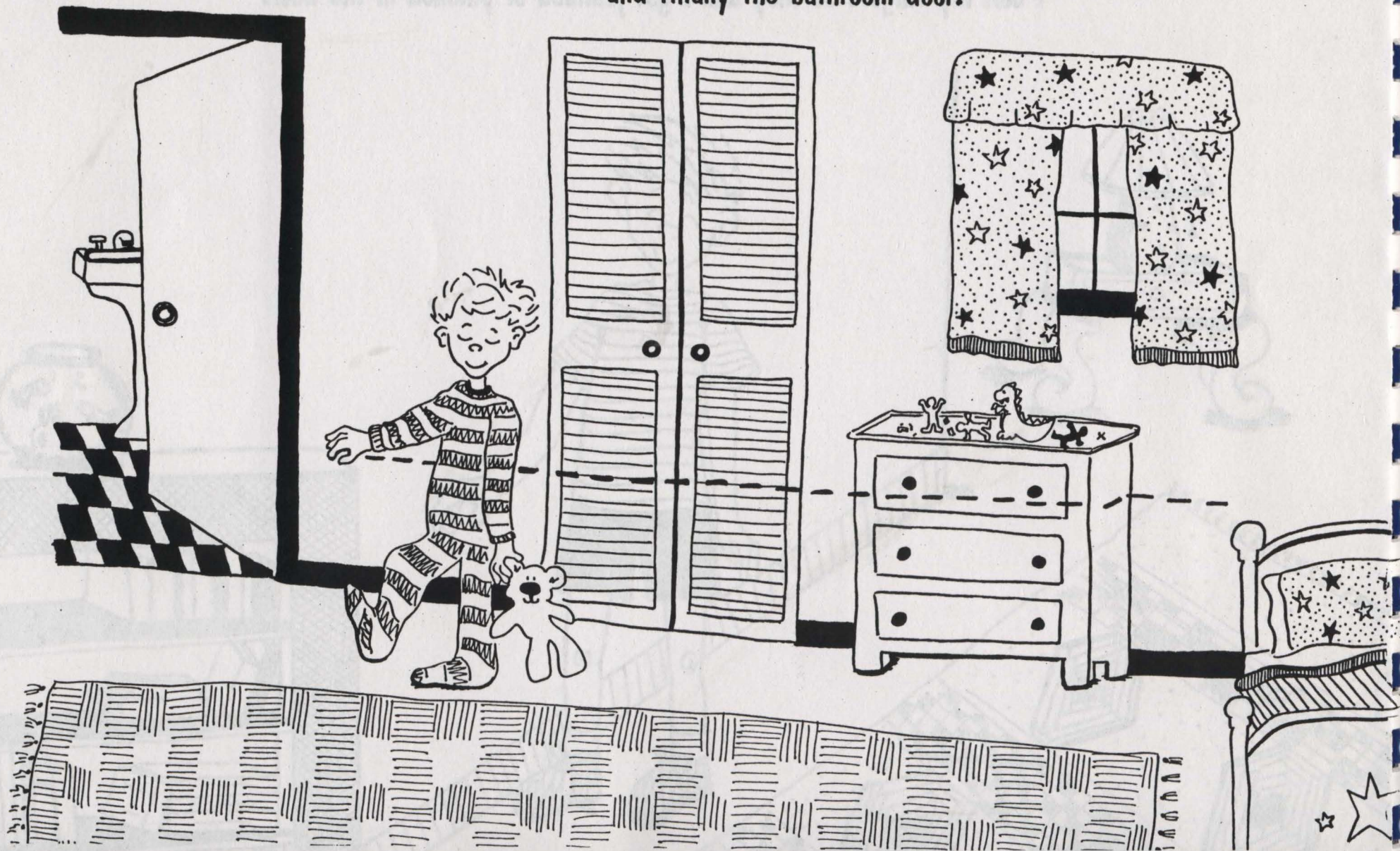
That was sighted guide. Now that you know all about it why don't you try it out?

There are also times when I walk around by myself and I don't need to use sighted guide. To help me know where I'm going I use a thing called "trailing." So I don't bump into things, I use something called "protective techniques." If you're wondering what I'm talking about, don't worry! I'll show you now what you need to know-----

When I want to get from place to place my hand can lead the way
instead of using Mom and Dad as my guide. I keep my arm stretched way out in front of me
so that my hand finds things first before my body bumps them. I put my side near the wall,
stretch my arm out, and touch the wall with the back of my hand.
I curl my fingers so they don't get jammed or pinched in the door.



Trailing helps me get where I need to go! I can trail other things too, like a counter top, bed, couch or table. If I have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, I can use trailing to make sure I find my way okay. When I put my hand against the wall I know where I am because I feel things along the way like my dresser, the closet, and finally the bathroom door.



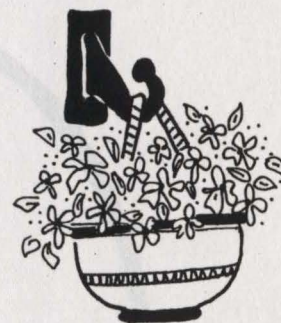
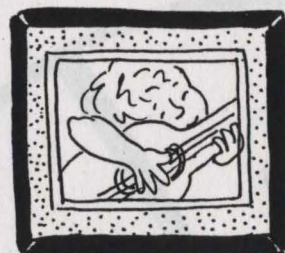
Sometimes Mom and Dad get worried when I'm walking or running around by myself.
So they don't get upset, I learned a way to put my arms to keep me safe.
But I don't hold them out straight like I'm Frankenstein.
Let me tell you how I do it.



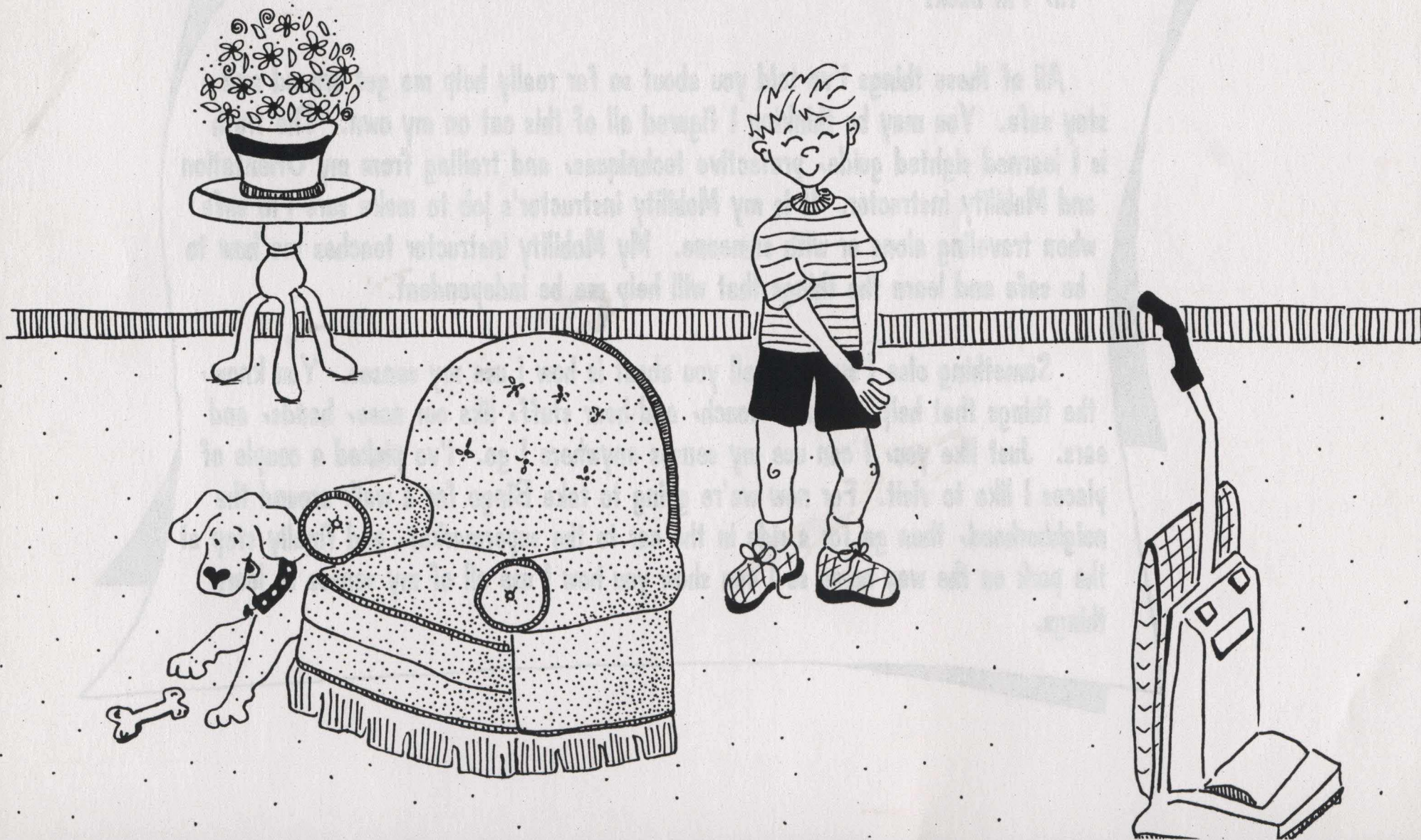
For things that I might bump into
that are near my head,
I turn my arm so my knuckles face me,
and bring my arm across my face
to just past my other shoulder.



Then I move my arm out a little so Mom
doesn't need to shout "watch out, watch out."
This way my hand bumps into things
first instead of my head.



If things are near my waist or below, I need to use my arm in a different way.
I keep my palm towards me and move my arm across my body to the front of my other leg.
Then I lift my arm out a little in front of me so my
hand bumps into things instead of the rest of my body.



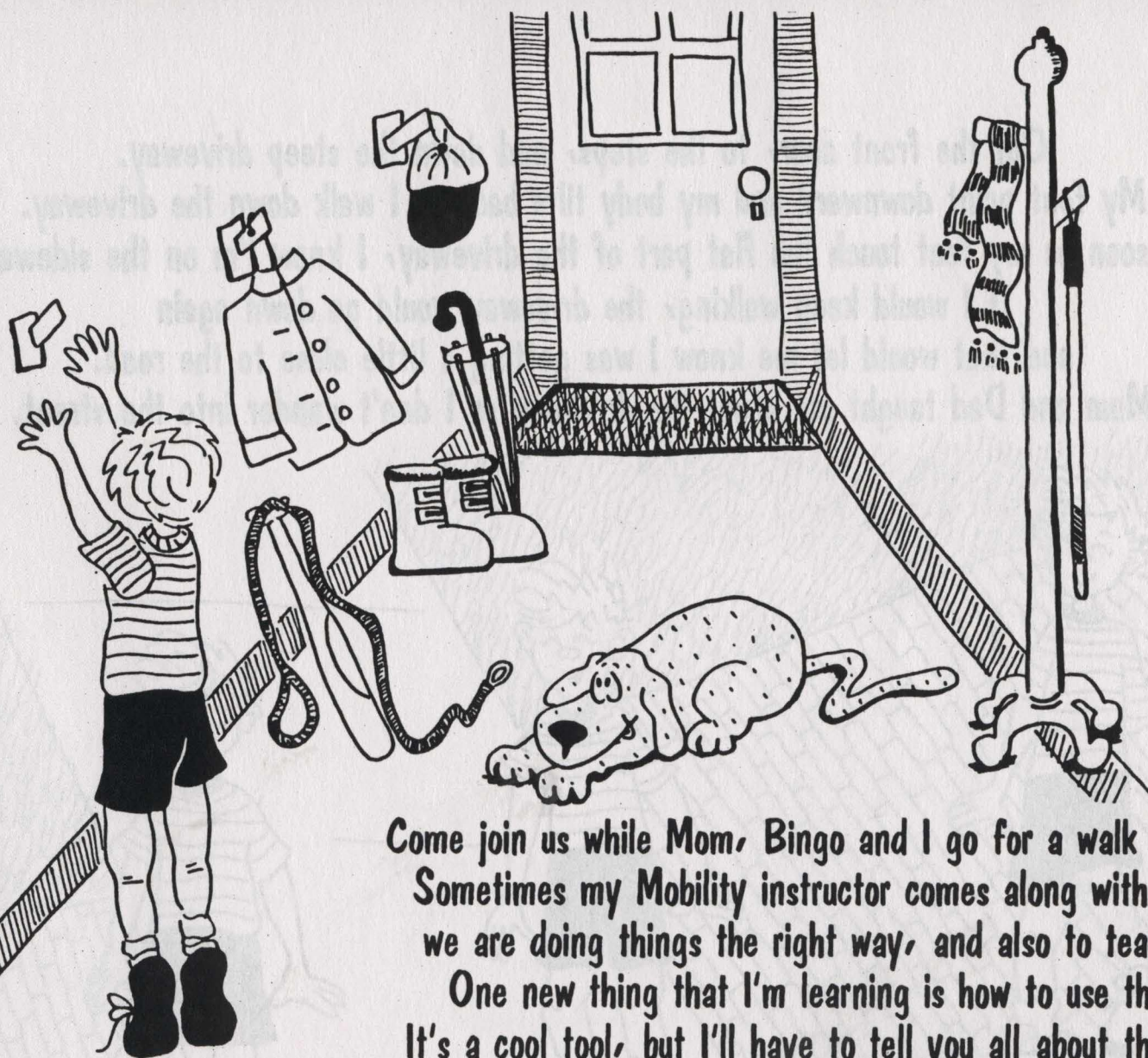


FROM THE DESK OF
OWEN M.

----Hi, I'm back!

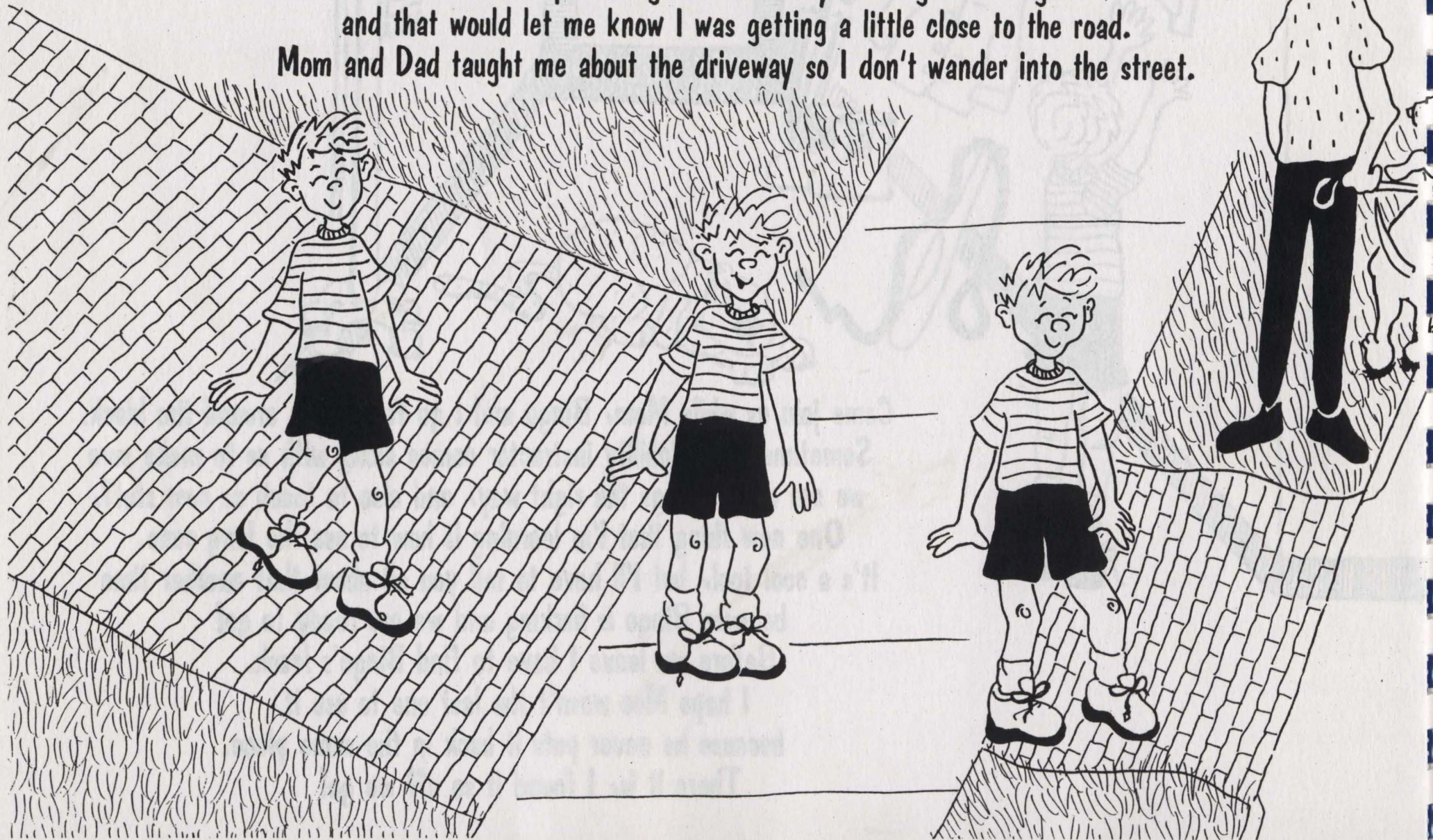
All of these things I've told you about so far really help me get around and stay safe. You may be thinking I figured all of this out on my own. The truth is I learned sighted guide, protective techniques, and trailing from my Orientation and Mobility instructor. It is my Mobility instructor's job to make sure I'm safe when traveling alone or with someone. My Mobility instructor teaches me how to be safe and learn the things that will help me be independent.

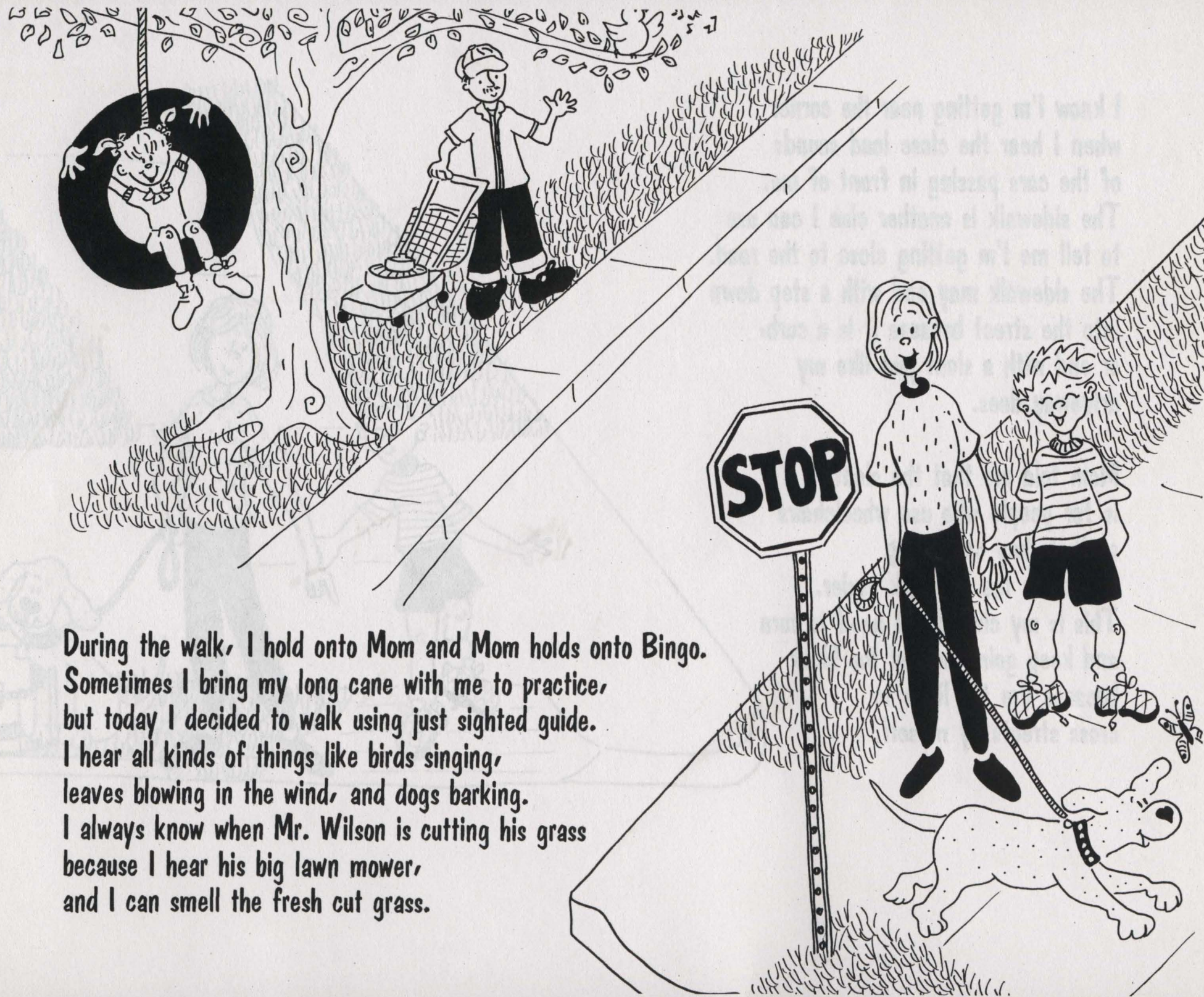
Something else I want to tell you about is how I use my senses. You know, the things that help us smell, touch, and hear stuff, like our nose, hands, and ears. Just like you, I can use my senses anywhere I go. I've picked a couple of places I like to visit. For now we're going to take Bingo for a walk around the neighborhood, then go for a ride in the car to the supermarket, and finally stop at the park on the way home so I can show you how I use all of my senses to learn things.



Come join us while Mom, Bingo and I go for a walk around the block. Sometimes my Mobility instructor comes along with us to make sure we are doing things the right way, and also to teach us new stuff. One new thing that I'm learning is how to use the long cane. It's a cool tool, but I'll have to tell you all about that another time because Bingo is barking and we are ready to go! Before we leave I have to find Bingo's leash. I hope Moe wasn't the last one to use it because he never puts it back in the same place. There it is, I found it so off we go!

Out the front door, to the steps, and down the steep driveway.
My feet point downward and my body tilts back as I walk down the driveway.
As soon as my feet touch the flat part of the driveway, I know I'm on the sidewalk.
If I would keep walking, the driveway would go down again
and that would let me know I was getting a little close to the road.
Mom and Dad taught me about the driveway so I don't wander into the street.

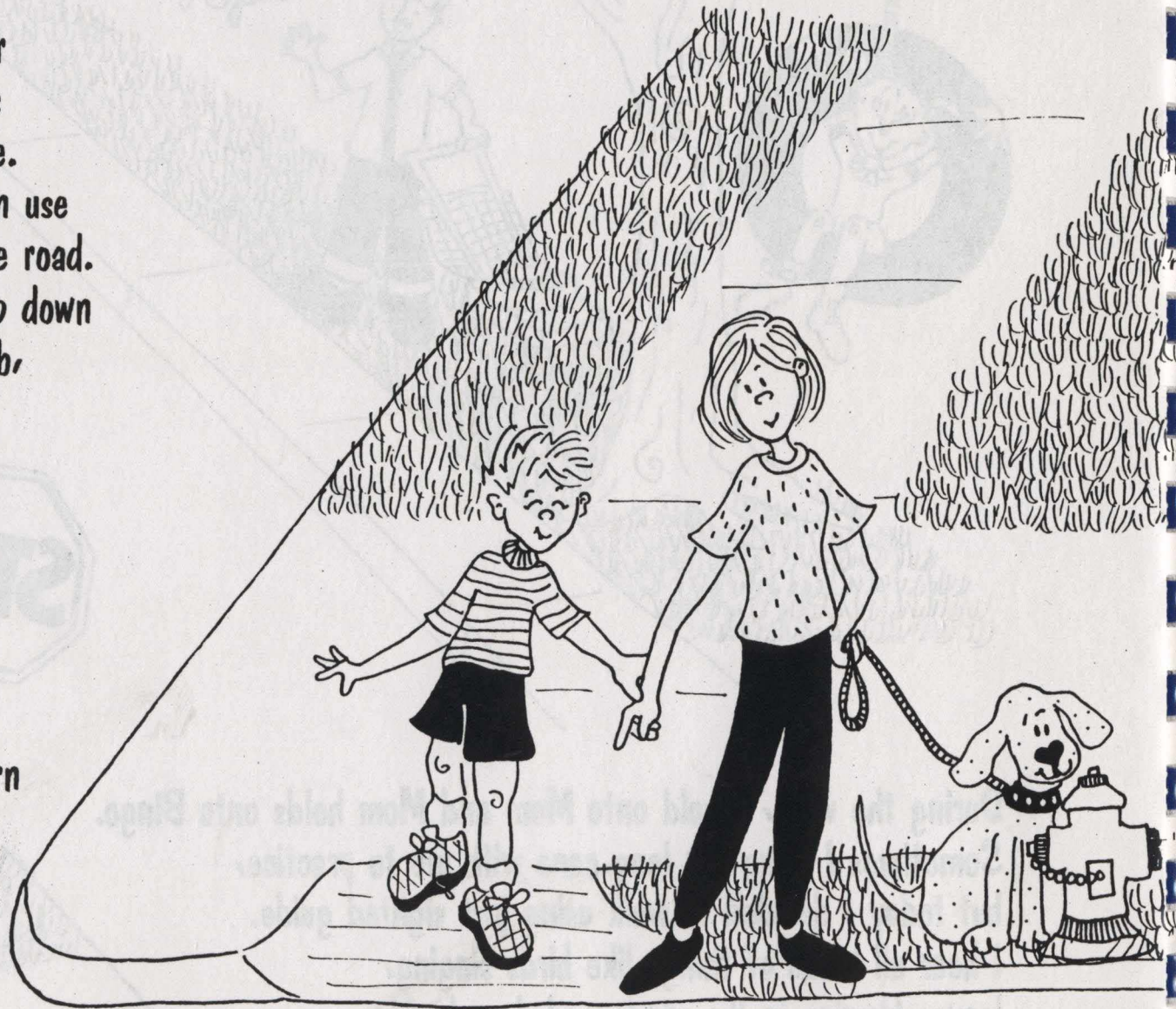




During the walk, I hold onto Mom and Mom holds onto Bingo. Sometimes I bring my long cane with me to practice, but today I decided to walk using just sighted guide. I hear all kinds of things like birds singing, leaves blowing in the wind, and dogs barking. I always know when Mr. Wilson is cutting his grass because I hear his big lawn mower, and I can smell the fresh cut grass.

I know I'm getting near the corner
when I hear the close loud sounds
of the cars passing in front of me.
The sidewalk is another clue I can use
to tell me I'm getting close to the road.
The sidewalk may end with a step down
into the street because it is a curb,
or end with a slant just like my
driveway does.

Mom told me that the slant
is for people who use wheelchairs
so that they can go up
and down the sidewalk easier.
This is my clue that I need to turn
and keep going around the block
because I'm too little to
cross streets by myself.



Sometimes Mom and I have to step off of the sidewalk and onto the grass because there may be a puddle, kids riding their bikes, or other stuff in our way.

Today Mom stops to tell me that workers are fixing the sidewalk and we need to walk around the construction. It is safer to walk towards the houses instead of the street.

I know that I am not on the sidewalk any more when I step onto someone's front lawn or in the grass that is near the street. I know grass feels softer than the hard pavement.

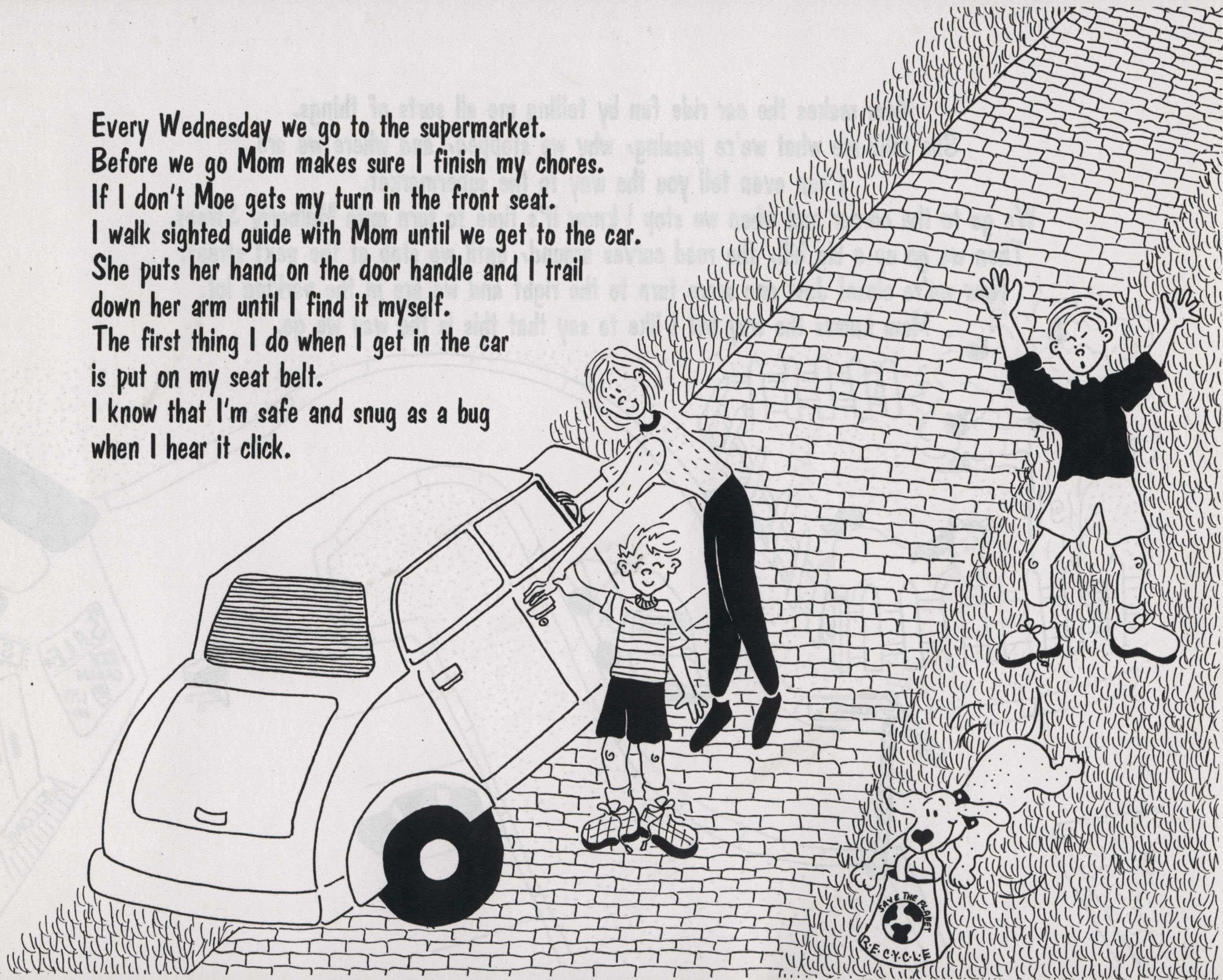
Oh no...I can hear that fat old cat meow. I know that I'd better grab onto Mom's arm and hang on tight, because as soon as Bingo hears it, we're off!!!





All of a sudden Mom and Bingo stop.
It's a good thing they do because I think we're headed straight for a tree!
Ahhh..It feels cooler standing under the shade of the leaves.
Hey! I'm starting to smell the bakery which means I am getting close to my house.
Mom and I decide to head for home.
Sometimes Moe leaves the radio on the porch playing his favorite tape.
I can hear the music, and this helps to tell me where my house is.
When Mom stops walking and starts to turn, and I feel the bricks under my feet,
I know I'm at my driveway because it's the only brick driveway on the block. We are finally home!

Every Wednesday we go to the supermarket.
Before we go Mom makes sure I finish my chores.
If I don't Mom gets my turn in the front seat.
I walk sighted guide with Mom until we get to the car.
She puts her hand on the door handle and I trail
down her arm until I find it myself.
The first thing I do when I get in the car
is put on my seat belt.
I know that I'm safe and snug as a bug
when I hear it click.



Mom makes the car ride fun by telling me all sorts of things.
She tells me what we're passing, why we stopped, and where we are.

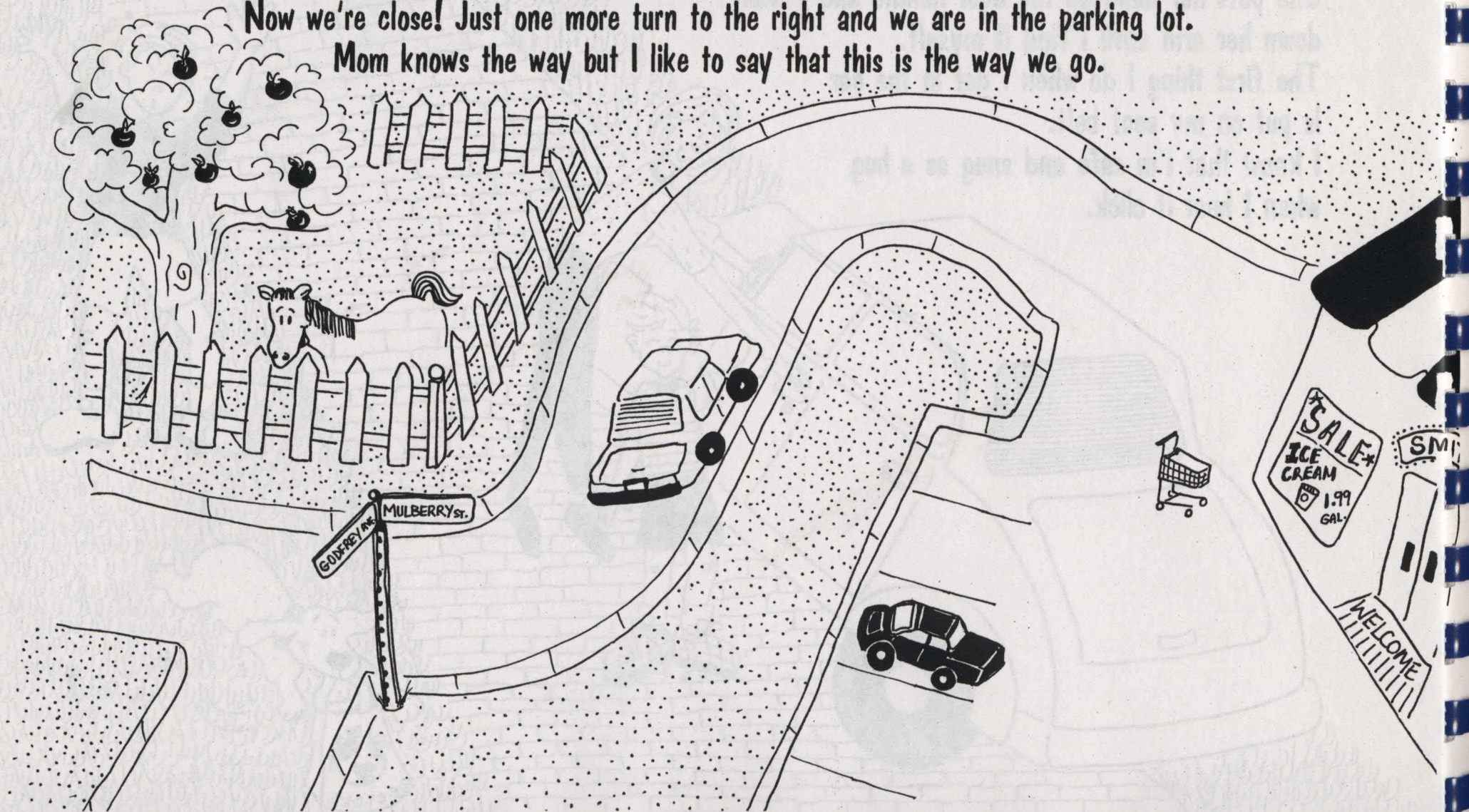
I can even tell you the way to the supermarket.

We go to the corner and when we stop I know it's time to turn onto Mulberry Street.

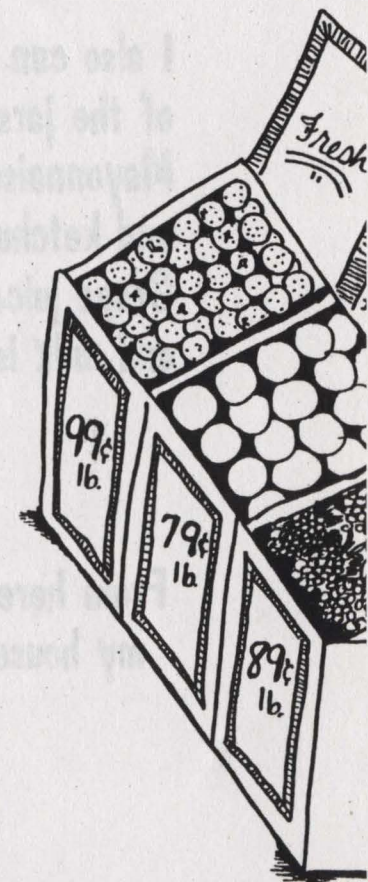
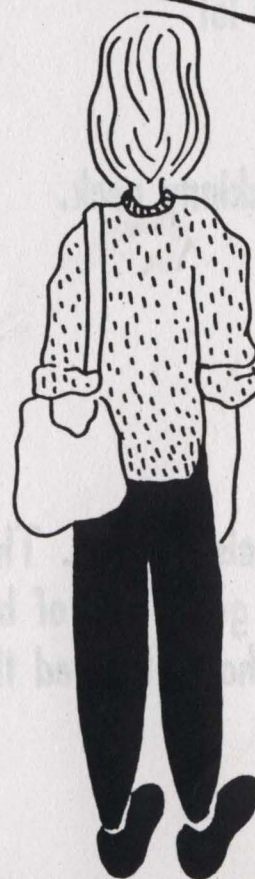
Then we go up a big hill, the road curves around, until we stop at the next street.

Now we're close! Just one more turn to the right and we are in the parking lot.

Mom knows the way but I like to say that this is the way we go.



When we get to the supermarket
it is my job to push the shopping cart.
Mom says that I'm a big help!
She showed me a way to pick out the
best fruits and veggies by feeling them.

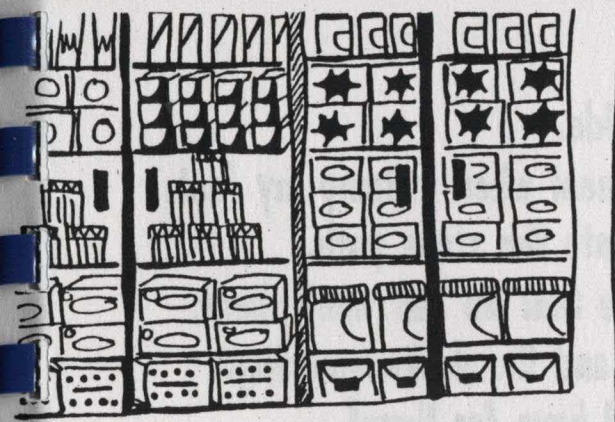


I know what fruit I'm touching because grapes are smaller and squish easier than lemons and limes which are harder and bigger. Cantaloupes are even bigger than lemons! They remind me of the toy balls I have at home. I remember all sorts of things at the store, like how the lettuce feels very different from broccoli.
< Yuck! I hate when Mom makes broccoli! >

I also can tell the difference between a lot of the jars in our cart. Mayonnaise is in a round short jar, and ketchup is in a taller bottle with a skinny neck. Grape juice comes in a big metal can and milk is in a cardboard carton.

From here I can smell the bakery two aisles away. This bakery almost smells as good as the one near my house! At the bakery we stop to get a loaf of bread so that we can go to the park on the way home to feed the ducks.

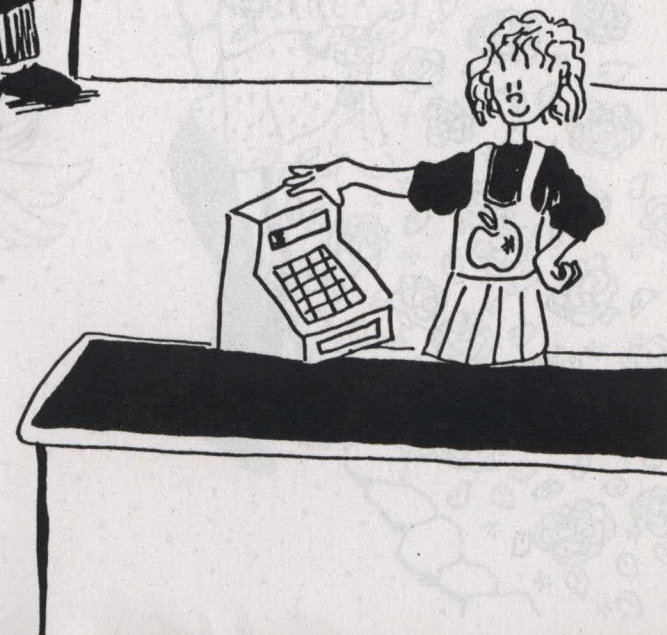




My favorite aisle is the freezer aisle,
especially on hot days.
Sometimes Mom lets me get some ice cream,
but not today because we're going to the park
and it would melt!



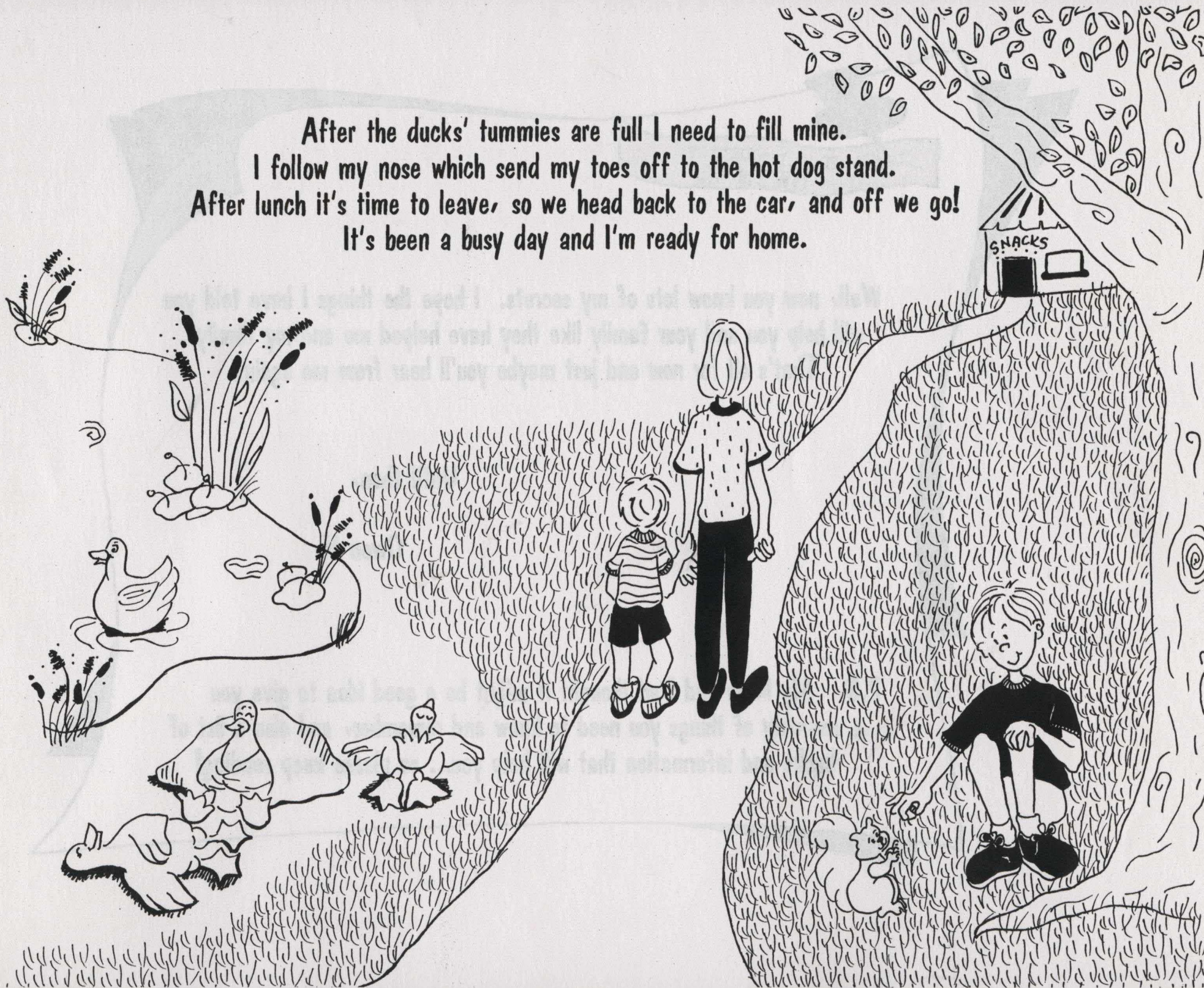
After the freezer aisle,
I listen for the check out so we can pay for our stuff.
I help Mom put the things in the bags and
back into the cart to take them out to the car.
Now that our shopping is done, we can go to the park!



The park is a busy place, so I like to walk sighted guide.
My favorite thing to do there is walk on the wooden bridge because it sounds neat when I stomp my feet.
It feels different and the sound changes when I step off the bridge onto the stone path.
There are a lot of pretty flowers in the park and Mom always has to stop so that we can smell them.
At last I know that we're just about there when I hear the water running and the ducks quacking.
All the ducks gather around as soon as they see the loaf of bread I have for them!



After the ducks' tummies are full I need to fill mine.
I follow my nose which send my toes off to the hot dog stand.
After lunch it's time to leave, so we head back to the car, and off we go!
It's been a busy day and I'm ready for home.





FROM THE DESK OF
OWEN M.

Well, now you know lots of my secrets. I hope the things I have told you will help you and your family like they have helped me and my family. That's all for now and just maybe you'll hear from me again.

Until then,

Owen M.

P.S. My Mom and Dad thought it might be a good idea to give you a summary of things you need to know and remember, and also a list of books and information that will help you... so please keep reading!

Summary of Sighted Guide

GRIP / BODY POSITIONING:

My Job:

- ☐ Hold my hand the same way I hold a can of soda
- ☐ Keep my arm close to my side and bent at the elbow
- ☐ Hold on just above the elbow when someone is my size
- ☐ Hold onto the wrist when my guide is an adult
- ☐ Hold on not too soft and not too hard
- ☐ Stay a step behind my guide
- ☐ Pay attention to how my guide's body moves so I know what to do

TURNS:

My Job:

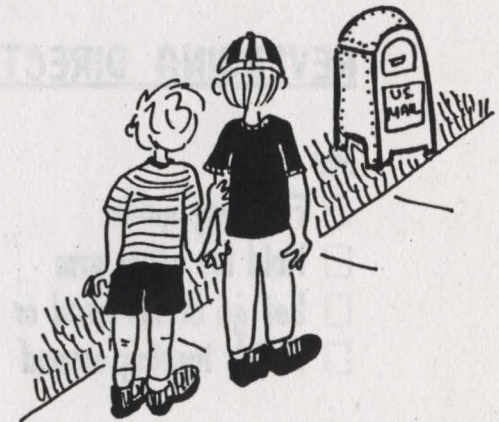
- ☐ Keep my elbow bent and close to my side, this helps me stay close to my guide so he knows where I am

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Look ahead and make sure that I don't bump or trip on anything
- ☐ Make sure that I'm walking 1/2 step behind < not next to >

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Make sure that there's enough room for both of us and that I am where I should be



REVERSING DIRECTIONS < ABOUT FACE >:

My Job:

- ☐ Face my guide
- ☐ Hold his other arm
- ☐ Let go of his hand or arm
- ☐ Finish turning around

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Face me
- ☐ Wait until I grab his arm
- ☐ Finish the turn with me

NARROW PASSAGEWAYS:

My Job:

- ☐ When I feel my guide's arm move back I move behind him so we're walking in a single line.
- ☐ I hold my arm straight out < instead of like an "L" >
- ☐ I walk a little slower

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Put his arm behind his back



CHANGING SIDES:

My Job:

- ☐ Slide my hand across my guide's back to find his other arm

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Tell me if I need to change sides

DOORS:

My Job:

- ☐ Change sides if I need to
- ☐ Hold the door open and shut it behind me

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Tell me we're coming to a door
- ☐ Tell me if it opens toward or away from us
- ☐ Tell me what side I need to be on to help hold the door

STAIRS:

My Job:

- ☐ Pay attention to what my guide is telling me and what I need to do



My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Approach the stairs squarely
- ☐ Stop at things that I need to pay special attention to
- ☐ Tell me what it is and what I need to do
- ☐ Stop at the top or bottom and wait for me to catch up

SEATING:

My Job:

- ☐ Slide my hand down my guide's arm
- ☐ Check with my hand to see if its okay to sit down
- ☐ Put the backs of BOTH my legs against the chair before sitting

My Guide's Job:

- ☐ Tell me if it's the front, back or side of the chair
- ☐ Put his hand on the back of the chair

I can do these myself but you can help me by checking that I'm doing it right!

TRAILING:

- ☐ Keep my arm near the wall and in front of me
- ☐ Keep my fingers curled

PROTECTIVE TECHNIQUES:

- ☐ To protect me from things that are high I hold my arm across my face with my knuckles facing me
- ☐ To protect me from things that are low I hold my arm across my body in front of my other leg

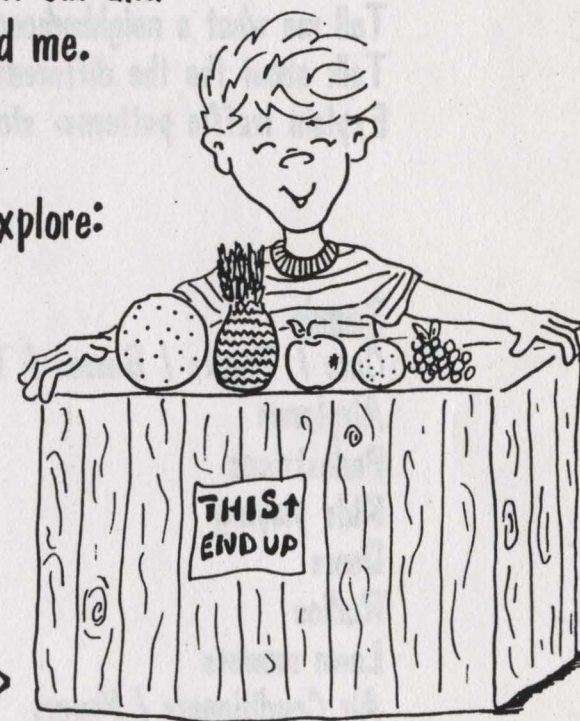


There are lots of things that my family and friends point out and explain that help me know what's happening around me.
The more that I know, the further I can go!

Here are some examples of everyday things that we can explore:

AT THE GROCERY STORE

Let me ride in the cart or let me help push
Tell me what things you find in a grocery store
Explain about the aisles < how many there are and how they are set up >
Tell me what we are passing by
Let me guess where we are by touching or feeling different things
Make me aware of and why there are temperature changes < like the cold freezer aisle >



Sounds

Cash register
Doors opening
Deli machines
Carts turning
Motors in the freezers
Cashiers talking

Smells

Fruits and veggies
Spices
Deli
Bakery
Seafood
Detergents and fabric softener
Cleaning supplies
Soaps and shampoo

Touch

Fruits and veggies
Paper towels, napkins, toilet paper
Cereal boxes
Tile floor and mats
Glass doors on freezer
Bottles, jars, cans
Conveyor belt at register
Money < coins and paper >

☐ If your child has vision then help him to use it more efficiently. Point out visual clues such as colors, shapes, signs and labels, lights, etc..

OUTSIDE

Talk about the layout of streets < one way, two way, wide, narrow >

Tell me what a neighborhood block is < that it usually has four streets and four corners >

Talk about the the different curbs and corners < some are high, some low, some are ramps for wheelchairs >

Explain traffic patterns, stop signs and traffic lights

Sounds

Cars / Trucks / Busses / Trains

Airplanes

Pedestrians

Kids playing

Doors

Radios

Lawn mowers

Air Conditioners / Motors

Animals / Insects < birds, cats, dogs, crickets, bees >

Smells

Garbage / Sewers

Bakery

Flowers

Fresh cut grass

Food cooking

Touch

Grass < yard, lawn >

Grass line

Dirt / Mud

Gravel

Asphalt

Fences < chain link, picket, wooden >

Walls < brick, stone, wood, aluminum siding >

Mailbox

Fire hydrant

Poles < light, telephone, street sign >

Trees

Bushes / Hedges / Flowers

Garbage cans

Cars

Bicycles

Driveways



RIDING IN THE CAR

Talk about what we are passing < houses, farms, factories, fields, parking lots, schools, stores, gas stations >

Name the streets we are on

Tell why we are going fast or slow, and why we stop

Point out the turns and how it feels going up or down hill

Sounds

Car engine

Horns

Passing traffic

Idling cars

Traffic surge

Screeching brakes

Smells

Gas

Exhaust

Oil

Air freshener

Outside smells

Touch

Let me explore the car inside and out!

Engine

Trunk

Grill

Headlight

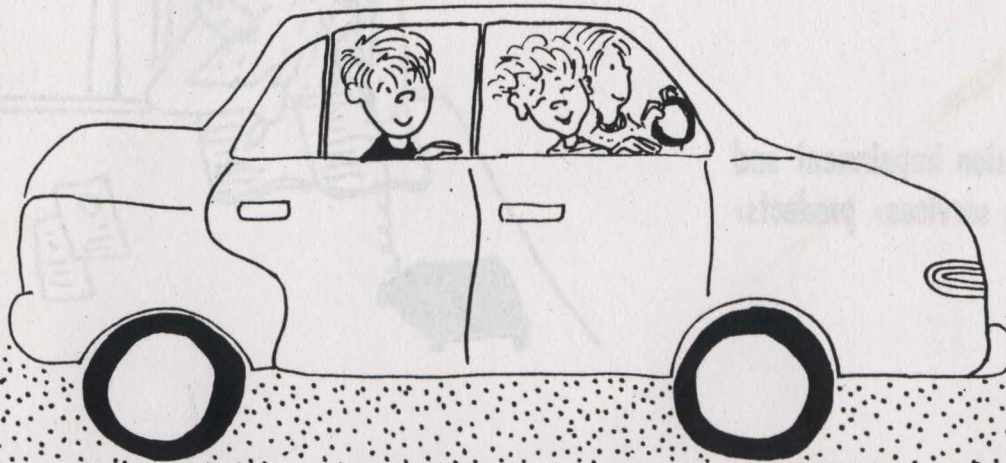
Four tires

Door handles

Dashboard and controls

Steering wheel

Seat belts



Here are some of the places where my Mom and Dad got information. It helped us so you might want to check them out too! Also, don't forget! You can always ask your Orientation and Mobility instructor if you have questions.

American Council of the Blind Parents

c/o American Council of the Blind

1155 15th Street, N.W., Suite 720

Washington, DC 20005

< 202 > 467-5081 OR < 800 > 424-8666

Fax: < 202 > 467-5085

- A support group for parents with blind and visually impaired children

American Foundation for the Blind

11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300

New York, NY 10001

< 212 > 502-7660 OR < 800 > AFB-LINE, Hotline

TTY/TTD: < 212 > 502-7662

Fax: < 212 > 502-7777

E-mail afbinfo@afb.org

Website <http://www.afb.org/afb>

- AFB Hotline provides information on vision impairment and blindness and answers questions regarding services, products, technology, and publications.



DB-LINK

345 North Monmouth Avenue

Monmouth, OR 97361

< 800 > 438-9376

Website <http://www.tr.wosc.osshe.edu/dblink>

- The National Information Clearinghouse on Children who are Deaf-Blind

The Lighthouse Inc.

National Center for Vision and Child Development

111 East 59th Street

New York, NY 10022

< 212 > 821-9200

- Develops educational materials and promotes the interests of children with or at risk of developing a vision impairment

National Association for Parents of Visually Impaired, Inc.

Box 317 Watertown, MA 02272-0317

< 800 > 562-6265

- Provides support to parents and families of visually impaired children and youths

National Federation of the Blind

1800 Johnson Street

Baltimore, MD 21230

< 410 > 659-9314

Fax: < 410 > 685-5653

Website <http://www.nfb.org>

- Has a parent division for information and resources

**If you have a computer then you can use it to get information.
Here are some things you might want to try.**

Websites

Index of Blindness Related E-mail Lists- <http://hicom.net/~oedipus/blist.html>

Blind Links -List of Blindness Related Websites- <http://seidata.com/~marriage/rblind.html>

Listserve

Blind Families is a list for the discussion of all aspects of family life as affected by blindness.

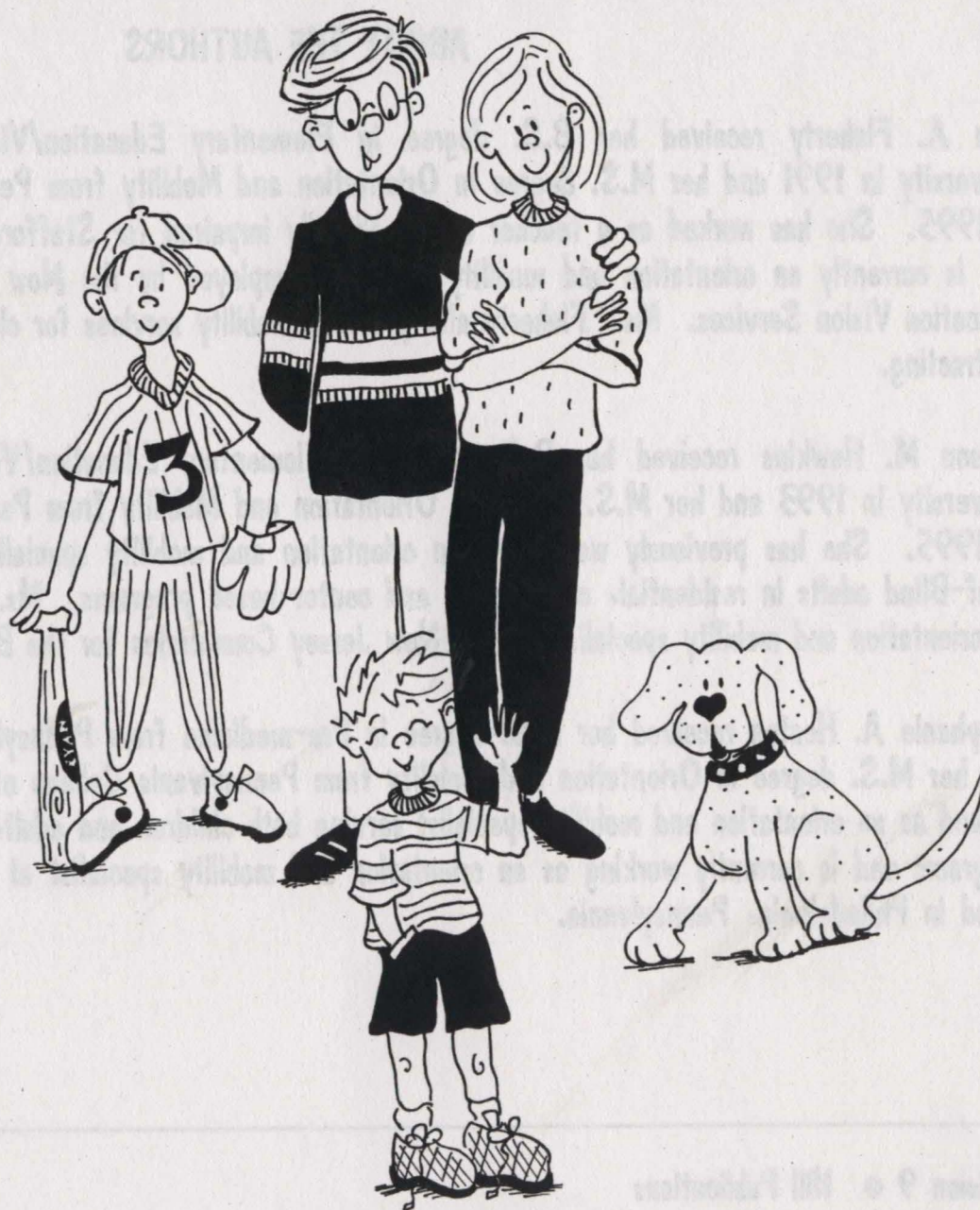
To subscribe send e-mail to listserv@sjvm.stjohns.edu and say in the body of the message:

subscribe blindfam your first name your last name

**These are some of the books Mom and Dad found helpful.
I thought you might like to read some of them too!**

- ☐ **Building Blocks: Foundations for Learning for Young Blind and Visually Impaired Children**
B. Dominguez & J. Dominguez < 1991 > . New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Early Focus: Working with Young and Visually Impaired Children and Their Families**
R. Pogrud, D. Fazzi, & J. Lampert < 1992 > . New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Get Ready, Get Set, Go: A guide for parents of visually impaired children**
J. Schuch < 1980 > . East Lansing: International Institute for Visually Impaired
- ☐ **Hand in Hand: Essentials of communication and orientation and mobility for your students who are deaf-blind.**
K. Huebner, J. Prickett, T. Welch, & E. Joffee, < 1995 > . New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Help Me Become Everything I Can Be**
M. Mulholland & M. Wurster < 1983 > . New York: American Foundation for the Blind

- ☐ **How to Thrive, Not Just Survive**
K. Huebner & R. Swallow <1987>. New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **An Orientation and Mobility Primer for Families and Young Children**
B. Burk & E. Hill <1989>. New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Parenting Preschoolers- Suggestions for raising young blind and visually impaired children**
K. Ferrell <1984>. New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Pathways to Independence - Orientation and mobility skills for your infant and toddler**
B. O'Mara <1994>. New York: The Lighthouse Inc.
- ☐ **Reaching, Crawling, Walking...Let's Get Moving- Orientation and mobility for preschool children**
S. Maida & S. Simmons <1992>. Los Angeles: Blind Childrens Center
- ☐ **Show Me How - A manual for parents of preschool visually impaired and blind children**
M. Brennan <1982>. New York: American Foundation for the Blind
- ☐ **Touch the Baby: Blind and Visually Impaired Children as Patients-Helping Them Respond to Care**
L. Harrell <1984>. New York: American Foundation for the Blind



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Erin A. Flaherty received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education/Visually Impaired from Kutztown University in 1991 and her M.S. degree in Orientation and Mobility from Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1995. She has worked as a teacher of the visually impaired for Stafford County Virginia Public Schools and is currently an orientation and mobility specialist employed by the New York City Board of Education-Education Vision Services. Ms. Flaherty also provides mobility services for children and adults through private contracting.

Allison M. Hawkins received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education/Visually Impaired from Kutztown University in 1993 and her M.S. degree in Orientation and Mobility from Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1995. She has previously worked as an orientation and mobility specialist serving adults, children, and Deaf-Blind adults in residential, community, and center-based programs. Ms. Hawkins is currently working as an orientation and mobility specialist for the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Stephanie A. Heaton received her B.S. degree in Pre-medicine from Pennsylvania State University in 1992 and her M.S. degree in Orientation and Mobility from Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1995. She has worked as an orientation and mobility specialist serving both children and adults in community and center-based programs and is currently working as an orientation and mobility specialist at the Associated Services for the Blind in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

